

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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DEPARTMENT FOR COUNSELOR'S OFFICE

E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS:PEPR, PINT, UK, EI
SUBJECT: REACTION TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON NORTHERN IRELAND

1. REACTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC TO THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS DURING INTERROGATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND HAVE SO FAR BEEN SURPRISINGLY MUTED. THE GOVERNMENT HAS CAREFULLY AND APPARENTLY DELIBERATELY REFRAINED FROM ATTEMPTING TO MAKE POLITICAL GAIN OUT OF THE AFFAIR.

2. IRISH MFA ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ANGLO-IRISH AFFAIRS TOLD COUNSELOR NIMETZ AT A LUNCHEON ON JUNE 14 THAT HE BELIEVES THE AMNESTY REPORT, OR AT LEAST THE WAY IT IS COMING OUT PUBLICLY, IS SOMEWHAT EXAGGERATED AND UNFAIR TO THE RUC. DONLON SAID THAT THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT ACCORDING TO GOI SOURCES THE POLICE IN NORTHERN IRELAND ARE ACTUALLY GETTING AT THE TERRORISTS, THAT VERY FEW INNOCENT PEOPLE ARE GETTING SWEEPED UP -- IN COMPARISON TO THE EARLIER YEARS OF THE TROUBLES -- AND THAT THE GOI ACCEPTS THAT THE "SYSTEMATIC TORTURE"

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AS BROUGHT FORTH AT STRASBOURG HAS ENDED. DONLON SAID, HOWEVER, THAT EVEN ACCEPTING ALL THIS HE BELIEVES THAT THE CASTLE-REAGH CENTER SHOULD BE CLOSED DOWN -- IT HAS NOW BECOME A HATED SYMBOL TO THE MINORITY COMMUNITY, AND PRACTICALLY SPEAKING INTERROGATION CAN BE EASILY DECENTRALIZED WITH "A FEW COMPUTER TERMINALS".

3. IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER O'KENNEDY ANSWERED A QUESTION ON THE SUBJECT IN THE IRISH PARLIMENT (DAIL) JUNE 14 WITH THE SAME MILD APPROACH AS DONLON (WHO HAD BRIEFED HIM). O'KENNEDY SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH BRITISH AUTHORITIES ABOUT CASTLEREAGH AND THEY HAD ASSURED HIM THEY STANDBY THE UNDERTAKING GIVEN BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL BEFORE THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS. O'KENNEDY REFUSED TO BE DRAWN OUT ANY FURTHER AND COMMENTED THAT HE WAS "EXAMINING" THE AMNESTY REPORT.

4. ONE OF DONLON'S ASSISTANTS LATER TOLD US THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL REASONS FOR THE GOI RESTRAINT. THE MAIN ONE, HE SAID, IS THAT PRIME MINISTER LYNCH HAS GIVEN FIRM ORDERS THAT THE VERBAL "SLANGING" MATCH WITH THE UK HAS TO COME TO AN END "NO MATTER WHAT MASON MIGHT SAY". ANOTHER REASON IS THAT IRELAND HAS ITS OWN PROBLEMS WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND ALLEGATIONS OF POLICE BRUTALITY.

5. THE NEWSPAPERS HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY RESTRAINED COMPARED TO THEIR USUAL SEIZURE OF OPPORTUNITIES TO BASH THE BRITISH. THE IRISH TIMES TALKS ABOUT "CAUSES FOR DISQUIET" IN A SOMBER BUT HIGH-TONED EDITORIAL. THE CORK EXAMINER CRITISIZES THE INQUIRY METHODS ANNOUNCED BY MASON, BUT ADDS: "WE ARE NOT SAYING THAT THE PROPOSED INQUIRY WILL BE IMPROPERLY CARRIED OUT, BECAUSE WE SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW."

6. SENATOR KENNEDY'S STATEMENT ON THE AMNESTY REPORT WAS WIDELY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND PROMINENTLY PUBLISHED HERE. WHAT LITTLE REACTION WE HAVE NOTED IS POSITIVE BUT NOT PARTICULARLY ENTHUSIASTIC. RENDAHL

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